

The Examiner of STREAMWOOD

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"IF I WERE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER OR A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CHOOSE THE LATTER." THOMAS JEFFERSON

50 cents
August 14, 2019

U-46 Board given
report on term eve
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Village picks vendor
for sewer project
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Cost per student data to be required of U-46

By Seth Hancock

This year's school district report cards from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will now include a break down of per student spending for each school.

The Board of Education in School District U-46 received a presentation on the changes as well as on expectations from the so-called "evidence-based" funding at its meeting on Monday, July 15. Board members John Devereux, Veronica Noland and Donna Smith were absent.

The change to the ISBE report card stems from new federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) according to Robyn Cornelissen, financial controller.

ESSA will require site-based expenditure data be reported starting with information gathered from the 2018-2019 school year. The ISBE report card will be released at the end of October according to Cornelissen.

"The act reads that every per pupil expenditure needs to be reported, both personnel and non-personnel expenditures have to be reported and disaggregated by federal and state and local on each school's district report card," Cornelissen said.

Cornelissen added: "Illinois is in a unique position along with our evidence-based funding. Having the ESSA be site-based, it puts us in a unique position to be able to use the information to not only coordinate our funding but then also use our school systems and then use that holistically in our schools to make the best decisions."

The new reporting will lead to better equity in funding Cornelissen claimed and will help determine if student

performance matches spending. She said that every expense must be accounted for under the new reporting with some exclusions like charter school tuition, adult or continuing education, community services, payments to other government bodies, debt services, capital assets, reimbursement expenditures.

"We don't have to explain that, we don't have to detail that. It's just a number," Cornelissen said of the excluded data.

U-46 will create a database for compiling and analyzing data officials said and will develop what it calls a "narrative" for 60 separate sites in the district.

"This is the story," Cornelissen said. "These are all of the spending variations that could cause a school's spending to go up or down."

Some schools in U-46 will spend more per student than others according to Cornelissen who said some schools have higher free or reduced-price meal students and English language learners, some have different transportation requirements and different enrollment levels leading to variations.

Cornelissen said the district will segregate spending into separate categories as being site-level or central school district spending to determine the per student spending at each school.

How each district reports and segregates data will be different according to officials who claimed the public would not be able to compare U-46 to other schools because of it.

"Individual districts can determine how they go about that process," said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders who added:

"I think it's important that the board understands and the community understands that when you (get the report cards) you need to look into the details of how that school district reported these types of numbers to the state."

"Our families would not be able to go and compare Elgin High School to Schaumburg High School and be able to make a fair assessment," Cornelissen said.

Board member Melissa Owens asked if the method U-46 uses will be in the report card to which Cornelissen said its included in the narrative for each site.

Owens asked if the district will "instruct people on the best way to read this?"

Cornelissen said U-46 wants "to be more proactive than reactive" in getting the narratives out early so the district can tell the public how to digest the information.

Owens said that the public, including "families and parents," may be unable to understand the data and "there's going to be a learning curve" and Sanders agreed. Sanders said "context matters" and could "envision a CAC (Citizens' Advisory Council) meeting" where parents see their children are in a school that spends less per student than others in the district.

Sue Kerr, the board's president, also agreed saying "people will just look at the number." She asked how long the narratives will be for each site and

Cornelissen said: "It shouldn't be that long. We're going to just use the data, we're going to just use the numbers, to tell the story. We have some that will be longer than the other."

Kerr asked if the narrative was required to which Cornelissen said it was not as some districts will not include a narrative. Kerr said that means the public will be unable to compare U-46 schools to other school districts.

Owens asked if each U-46 site will use the same template for its narrative and Cornelissen said they would.

U-46 has consistently lagged behind the state in academic results on the annual ISBE report card, but Sanders said "I think we've led the state in a number of areas" and "they've looked to us... on how they implement across the state" the new reporting.

Regarding the "evidence-based" funding, this upcoming school year will be the third year under this funding formula from the state according to Dale Burnidge, director of financial services.

The state added \$300 million to the formula in Fiscal Year 2019 and \$312 million in additional taxpayer dollars in FY2020 according to Burnidge while U-46 received \$158.4 million from the formula in FY2018 and \$179.4 million in FY2019. The district expects the spending increases from the state to continue despite evidence

See U-46 cost, pg. 4

New administrators named at U-46 schools

By Seth Hancock

School District U-46 has announced eight new administrators for the 2019-2020 school year in a recent press release.

Included were four administrators at schools in *The Examiner* readership area including Jennifer Van Deusen as principal at Streamwood High School, Cyndi Aleman as principal at Bartlett's Nature Ridge Elementary School, Stephanie Sylvester as principal at Bartlett's Liberty Elementary School and Adam Zurko as principal at Wayne Elementary School.

Van Deusen has worked in U-46 for over a decade according to the release starting as an English teacher at Elgin and South Elgin high schools, associate principal at Bartlett High School and she was appointed as interim principal at Streamwood in June. She holds three degrees including a doctorate from Olivet Nazarene University in ethical leadership.

Aleman has been with the district for over two decades most recently as assistant principal at Elgin's Hillcrest Elementary School. She holds two degrees including a masters of arts from Concordia University-Chicago in curriculum and instruction.

Sylvester has been with the district

for 12 years and was the assistant principal at Liberty the last two years. She holds three degrees including two masters of arts, one from Bradley University (administration) and Roosevelt University (executive leadership and organizational change).

Zurko comes to U-46 after working in an administrative role in the Rochelle Elementary School District 231, and he has been a school administrator the last 13 years. He holds four degrees including masters of arts from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (curriculum and instruction) and Aurora University (educational leadership).

Also announced were four principals at Elgin schools including Charlotte Coleman at Kimball Middle School, Joel Pollack at Creekside Elementary School, Tiffany Robinson at Lowrie Elementary School and Noe Velazquez at Lords Park Elementary School.

"The start of the school year is always an exciting time, with lots of fresh beginnings," U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said in the release. "We are pleased to welcome new professionals to U-46, and to congratulate longtime U-46 employees who are taking on new roles. They all join staff who are eager to work on behalf of our more than 38,000 students and their families."



Not a typical batter

Black Caps batsman cricket player making contact with bowler's delivery that produced runs with the result during a conference match. For story and more photos see page 8.

(Examiner photo by Bruce Leighty)

Pet of the Week



Robo Cop wants to ‘retire’ from duty
Robo Cop has survived the streets of DuPage County as a stray and is now looking for a home and a family to call his own! This young, 6-month-old rabbit is an outgoing boy that needs space to move about, eat plenty of tasty greens and receive loads of love. For more information please call 630-407-2800 or email animalservices@dupageco.org. (Photo courtesy of County Animal Control)

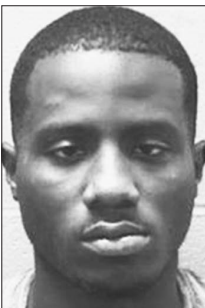
Vendor bid approved for sewer lining project

By Kristin Carreno
During the Village Board meeting on Thursday, Aug. 1, trustees voted unanimously in favor of a resolution to accept a sewer lining project low bid of \$659,961 from Michels Pipe Services, Montgomery, Illinois. The high bid was \$831,630 from SAK Construction, Virgil, Illinois.
According to Director of Public Works Matt Mann, the 2019 budget includes funds for repairing the lining of sanitary and storm sewers that are in poor condition.
“There are storm and sanitary sewer pipes at 14 different locations in the village that need to be rehabilitated,” said Mann.
According to Mann, the pipes are eight- through 24-inch in diameter sewers and the total length is approximately 18,240 feet.
The sewers are deep and in congested locations or under pavement which makes conventional repairs difficult and expensive, according to Mann. In-

terior lining of the pipes is cost effective, faster and safer due to the fact no excavation and very little restoration is required. The cured in-place pipe liner is installed from the interior of the manholes and reinforces the deficient host pipe.
“The lining of high priority sanitary sewer also helps the village meet the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District’s requirements for their mandated inflow and infiltration control program,” Mann said.
Trustee James Cecille asked if Michels Pipe Services previously performed work for the village.
“They’ve worked in town in the past,” Mann answered. “They’ve done about three different lining projects.”
Michels has performed well on prior projects and has favorable references, Mann added.
“You’ve got my vote,” Cecille stated.
According to Mann, the engineer’s estimate was \$796,140.

Parking lot shooting suspects surrender to Elgin police

Two brothers sought in connection with a parking lot shooting in Elgin have been taken into custody. Xavier L. Butler, 25, has been charged with first-degree murder and aggravated unlawful use of a weapon. He is being held in lieu of \$2 million bail in Kane County Jail. Isaiah Y. Butler, 23, has been charged with first-degree murder and is being held in lieu of \$1 million bail.
According to the Elgin Police Department, the pair turned themselves in on Saturday, Aug. 10.
Elgin police had issued a warning to the public about two “armed and dangerous men” following a Tuesday, Aug. 6 parking lot altercation that led to a fatal shooting.
According to Elgin police, on Aug. 6, at approximately 10:32 a.m., Elgin po-



Isaiah Butler



Xavier Butler

lice officers responded to the 1200 block of Fleetwood Drive for a reported shooting.
Officers arrived to find a 24-year-old male subject, Joshua Bey, 24, of Elgin suffering from an apparent gunshot wound. Bey was transported to Presence St. Joseph Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.
The Elgin Police Department’s preliminary investigation revealed that there was a verbal altercation between a group of subjects in a parking lot. The altercation turned physical, and Bey was ultimately shot.
During the investigation Elgin Police Chief Ana Lalley thanked “our community members for coming forward with information that lead to the identification of Isaiah Butler and Xavier Butler.”

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U-46 cost

Continued from page 1
and data showing Illinois is in poor financial health.
In presenting a tentative budget earlier this summer, the district claimed it was making conservative estimates by expecting at least \$5 million of additional taxpayer funds each year from the state from the “evidence-based” funding formula.
Illinois is currently \$160.8 billion in debt according to usdebtclock.org, it is ranked the worst in the nation for financial health according to George Mason University’s Mercatus Center’s annual ranking, the population has continued to decline and Gov. J.B. Pritzker recently signed 21 new tax and fee hikes with more being proposed.
U-46 has used the additional state taxpayer dollars to hire more counselors, administrative supports and instructional coaches according to Burnidge, and U-46 plans to hire 54 new employees this year.
The hiring continues despite a continued trend of enrollment declines. U-46 saw its fourth straight year of declines in 2018-2019 as it lost 633 stu-

dents from the previous year to fall to 38,572 total and has lost 1,915 total students since the 2014 enrollment total of 40,487 while spending has increased nearly \$100 million during that time which is over \$70 million faster than the rate of inflation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator.

Spots still open at woman’s workshop

A few reservations are still available for the annual “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” workshop at the Touch of Nature Environmental Center/Giant City State Park Sept. 27 to 29. The workshop fee is \$240, which includes meals, lodging, class instruction, use of class equipment and supplies, transportation during the workshop and “lots of fun.”
Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Log onto the IDNR website at this link for more information and registration materials: <https://bit.ly/2LWc0TR>.

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Status report provided to District U-46 board

By Seth Hancock

The 2019-2020 school year starts this week in School District U-46, and a presentation was given to the Board of Education at its meeting on Monday, Aug. 12.

Classes for most students start on Wednesday, Aug. 14 while preschool classes start a week later on Wednesday, Aug. 21.

Ann Chan, assistant superintendent for human resources, said the district is currently working on filling open positions. She said every full-time general education position is filled at the elementary level, but other positions still remain open.

"At the start of the week of July 22, we had 97 classroom teacher vacancies left to fill," Chan said. "With the return of the administrators... we have filled 49 since that week."

Chan added: "Plans are already in place to have an educator in every classroom on the first day of school."

Board member Donna Smith asked if open positions will remain posted until they are filled to which Chan said: "They remain open for anyone who wants to apply."

Chan said that the previous week an orientation was given for 230 new teachers in the district.

Josh Carpenter, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, said that the focus of that orientation

was "building professional relationships, planning and preparation and really understanding what an effective, strong classroom environment looks like."

"Onboarding those teachers is an important, critical component of what we do here in U-46.... The new teacher orientation is not an easy effort and a lot of hands go in on making sure that is a successful week," Carpenter said.

Carpenter said that there was ongoing professional development over the summer including two days in June at Elgin Community College (ECC). He said ECC has also hosted collaboration days recently on topics such as social studies, math, technology and social and emotional learning.

Sue Kerr, the board's president, asked if registration for students continues and Carpenter said it "will continue for sure."

Kerr also asked if the district had numbers on how many students have been vaccinated and Carpenter said he did not have those numbers but notices have been sent out to schools regarding students who have no vaccination records. Board member Veronica Noland asked the district to follow up and provide those numbers when they are ready.

Carpenter said there have been mobile clinics over the summer which continue for vaccinations. He said

project access students and new students have a 30-day extension.

Jeff King, deputy superintendent of operations, updated the board on several departments.

Regarding food services, King said a garden has been planted over the summer and vegetables have been harvested for salad bars. He said there has been expansion in salad bars with nine total now at elementary schools with the expansion being paid for by the through federal grants.

"We've been using grant money to expand that program and buy the equipment," King said. "Also, they are expanding their breakfast for all. That'll be in 21 elementary schools starting this fall."

The finance department has been working on the Fiscal Year 2020 budget and working with auditors over the summer according to King who also

said it has been working on site-based expenditure reporting which is "a ton of work that the department has not had to do the past years."

King estimated that 90 percent of new textbooks have been delivered to individual school sites by business services as well as "almost 16,000 Chromebooks and computers."

There are 301 total bus drivers and 283 routes have been completed by the transportation department according to King who said buses have been cleaned and have undergone safety inspections.

Plant operations have completed over \$42 million of work over the summer according to King which is "probably equivalent to the work that was performed in the district after the last bond referendum in 2000-2001."

Information services has upgraded systems and programs King said.

Sign ordinance discussed by Wayne village board

By Joe Hyland

At its Tuesday, Aug. 6 meeting, the Wayne Village Board began discussing proposed changes to the village's signage ordinance.

"These are not terribly significant the changes we are recommending," said Gary Mickey, village attorney.

Mickey said that the proposed changes came about due to a recent Supreme Court decision in the case of Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona. He said that the case was a First Amendment issue.

"No content signage is prohibited," Mickey summarized.

"Since it's a Supreme Court decision, I guess we can't do a whole lot," said Trustee Pete Connolly.

Mickey said that the issue could get sticky in the case of signage promoting church events as allowing such signage could be interpreted as promoting an establishment of religion. This could be considered a direct violation of the First Amendment prohibition against that.

"As soon as you mention religion, you have a problem," Mickey said. "The goal is to permit appropriate signage and avoid lawsuits."

Mickey said that the changes would not affect permanent signs, and that it was only about temporary signs.

Several trustees raised the issue of signs that might contain hate speech. Mickey said that it would be unwise to try to prohibit them.

"You don't want to get into a situation where you're trying to regulate speech," Mickey said.

He suggested the best course of action regarding hate speech would be to seek an injunction on grounds that such signs posed a threat to public safety.

Mickey emphasized that this was only a preliminary proposal, and would not be a comprehensive solution in any case.

"It's not a final document by any means," Mickey said. "There is no way to cover every scenario that someone will come up with."

Book club assists resident in learning English language



Bartlett resident Cristina Ligocki has used many resources in order to learn English, one of which was the Bartlett Public Library District. (Courtesy photo)

Joining in on the Bartlett Public Library District's BookLite book club conversation sounds a bit nerve-racking when you don't know many people present, but Bartlett resident Cristina Ligocki absolutely loved it.

"It was a dream come true," said Ligocki, referencing her experience at the BookLite book club.

The book discussed was "Beach Town" by Kay Andrews, and Ligocki said she was proud of herself and what she's accomplished by being able to read an English book as 17 years ago she came to the U.S. only speaking Portuguese.

Always a reader, Ligocki said she has loved libraries her whole life, so it was no question for her to seek out the Bartlett Public Library District as a resource in order for her to understand and speak the English language.

She attended the Conversational English classes when they were offered or she would pick up numerous books to look through, learning new words every day.

According to Ligocki, something else that helped her was surrounding herself with people who spoke English as their native tongue. She could do this

at the library, as well as by joining the Bartlett Women's Club, the Tri-Village Garden Club and Weight Watchers to immerse herself in the English language.

Ligocki added that another big help for her was attending church. She would go over the readings in Portuguese before, and then follow along as it was read aloud in English.

Ligocki explained that she used to be quiet at parties and gatherings when she first came to the U.S. With all of the learning she's been doing, and all of the effort she's put into understanding and speaking English, she said with a laugh, "Now I talk too much!"

The BookLite club meets at the Still Bar & Grill in Bartlett the third Thursday of each month. The next meeting is Thursday, Aug. 15 at 7 p.m. BookLite is a social book club that meets to talk books, grab a drink and meet new people. Books are available at the Adult Services desk one month prior to the discussion. August's book is "Before We Were Yours" by Lisa Wingate.

For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 837-2855 or visit www.bartlettlibrary.org.

Award

Continued from page 7

health of DuPage County residents 18 and younger.

"We appreciate the National Safety Council recognizing the progress of the PLT and their work to support our youth," said Karen Ayala, DuPage County Health Department's executive director. "We want to help teens make

smart choices today, so they can be wise decision makers as adults tomorrow."

According to the Illinois Youth Survey, since the PLT was formed eight years ago, alcohol and prescription drug use has declined among DuPage County high school students.

"While we are grateful to be recognized by the National Safety Council, we will continue to work with our partners to keep DuPage County youth safe," said Jordan Esser, Health Department community initiatives coordinator.

Rachel Gies surprises her readers with this suspenseful thriller. **The Darkness Within** is a murder mystery that is hot, hot, hot. Kate and her brother, Nick, are being terrorized. Someone is playing cat and mouse with them as they unveil illegal shipments and are in danger of becoming the beast's next victim as they get closer to the truth. The list of suspects is constantly changing. Terror and suspense explode as it all comes to a terrifying shocking end. Previously self published books include **Captured Pearl** and **One Size Fits Most**.

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NNO celebration draws huge attendance

The village and the Bartlett Police Department hosted its 25th annual National Night Out (NNO) on Tuesday, Aug. 6 at Bartlett Park, attended by thousands of residents. The Picnic in the Park capped off a week of activities. NNO is an annual designed as a community-building campaign that

promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. Millions of neighbors take part in NNO in thousands of communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories and military bases worldwide. Neighborhoods host block

parties, festivals, parades, cookouts and other community events with safety demonstrations, seminars, youth events, visits from emergency personnel, exhibits and more. Bartlett's celebration has been recognized with several national awards over the years.



Rey Young, left, and Elise Sparks panned for real gold pieces.



Representing Summersweet Lane, Gary, Jillian and Traci Schallerer were thrilled to win the Best Neighborhood Lighting category in the block party awards.



Noah Kosinski met Mario at the event.



Members of the Lions Club cooked and served 3,000 free hot dogs, along with chips and bottled water, to National Night Out attendees. (Examiner photos by Juli Schatz)



Guests to the National Night Out Picnic in the Park lined up to take a closer look at a working fire engine.



Tom and Cathy Schaefer came with a contingent of other 'Star Wars' characters from the 501st Midwest Garrison, which won of the new Community Spirit Awards.



The Bartlett High School drum line performed for guests.



A crowd of thousands converged on Bartlett Park for a slate of activities.

(Examiner photos by Juli Schatz)



Kassandra Murrillo helped her little brother Rafael steer his car at the race track sponsored by Joe Cotton Ford.



Scott Nader was one of several members of the BMX Stunt Team who performed at National Night Out.



As he does every year, an inflated McGruff the Crime Dog welcomed attendees to the park.

Press Clippings 08/14/2019

---The Daily Herald---08/14/2019

First Day of School: What it takes to get U-46 ready for 38,000 students

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Creekside Elementary School fourth grade dual language teacher Kristina Sawyer sorts books last week as she prepares her classroom for the start of the school year.



Creekside Elementary School fourth grade dual language teacher Kristina Sawyer prepares her classroom for the start of the school year Wednesday.



Creekside Elementary School fourth grade dual language teacher Kristina Sawyer watches as the class pet, a corn snake, does a little exploring.



Streamwood High School's new Principal Jennifer VanDeusen says this school year will be about embracing change and a new vision for the school.



Streamwood High School's new Principal Jennifer VanDeusen says this school year will be about embracing change and a new vision for the school.



Streamwood High School's employee lounge has been spruced up with new furniture, and foosball and air hockey tables ahead of the new school year starting Wednesday.



A custodial worker cleans the floor at South Elgin High School ahead of the start of the new school year Wednesday.



A custodial worker cleans lockers at South Elgin High School ahead of today's start of the new school year.

For weeks, suburban schools have been abuzz with a flurry of activity as officials prepare for the yearly onslaught of eager young learners scurrying about hallways and classrooms.

Getting a school ready is a daunting feat requiring round-the-clock work throughout the summer to get buildings in order.

Here is the process from three perspectives at the state's second-largest school district -- Elgin Area School District U-46 -- where more than 38,000 students begin classes Wednesday.



Creekside Elementary School fourth grade dual language teacher Kristina Sawyer holds the class pet, a corn snake, as she prepares her classroom for the new school year. Each year, her students give the snake a new name.

A teacher's tale

The star attraction that gets students excited in Kristina Sawyer's dual language classroom is a 5-year-old pet corn snake.

"Sky," as the snake was named by students last school year, is a big hit with Sawyer's fourth-graders at Creekside Elementary School in Elgin.

A former marine science teacher, Sawyer purchased the snake with grant funding and uses it as part of her instruction. She even keeps the shed snakeskin in zip-locked bags for students to measure the snake's growth.

"I actually take her out and let them either pet her or, toward the end of the year, they'll actually get to hold her," Sawyer said.

Getting the snake fed and settled into its tank for the new school year was Sawyer's first order of business upon returning to her classroom last week.

It's Sawyer's fifth year teaching a dual language classroom in which students are taught math in English, science and social studies in Spanish, and literacy in both languages.

She spent the past week decluttering and purging mounds of unused supplies, materials and bilingual books accumulated over the years and supplementing her classroom collection of board games with recent finds at thrift stores or in her mom's basement.

"I decided to make a board game shop this year because I love board games," Sawyer said. "Last year, we started a board game club after school in the winter and we had 50 kids join it ... It was just really nice to get kids involved in things that weren't screen based."

Sawyer got \$100 from the school's parent-teacher organization to purchase classroom supplies, which typically doesn't cover her costs. She also salvages used supplies from what students throw away at the end of each school year.

"I have old notebooks that can be reused, old pencils from other years ... I really try to save stuff for maybe students or families who can't bring in all the supplies," she said.

She uses a box of buttons collected from her childhood experiences as prize badges for students to earn for positive behavior.



A custodial worker cleans the floor at South Elgin High School ahead of the start of the new school year Wednesday. Hundreds of workers have been painstakingly sprucing up Elgin Area School District U-46's 57 school buildings, involving scrubbing down surfaces, then taking things apart and putting them back together again.

Behind the scenes:

Josh Beu's role as U-46's coordinator of maintenance operations is akin to the grease that makes a machine run well.

"If I've done my job, you won't even know that I was there," said Beu, who ensures the district's 57 school buildings are well cleaned and maintained for the new school year. "We're here to make it run smoothly."

As soon as school was out in May, a legion of custodial and maintenance workers began a painstaking process of sprucing up facilities, involving scrubbing down surfaces, then

taking things apart and putting them back together again. It's a coordinated plan working around summer school construction and mechanical projects.

"Every piece of furniture gets wiped down, the floors get stripped and waxed," Beu said. "We systematically go through the buildings and clean as much as we possibly can until the construction projects are completed. Then, we go after the buildings that were under construction for the last seven weeks."

Throughout the summer, workers have re-tiled the floors at 10 schools and portions of 10 other buildings, rebuilt bathroom partitions at three schools, repainted three schools from top to bottom, and sanded down and rebuilt three gym floors. A 34-member maintenance crew performed preventive maintenance and needed repairs on every piece of mechanical equipment in the buildings, and then tested the systems to ensure they are fully operational for the first day of classes.

"It's a daunting figure the amount of mechanicals that are inside one of these buildings," Beu said. "We're pulling everything apart -- anything mechanical, heating, cooling or a moving part. It keeps us busy. We're here to make sure the education process works."



Streamwood High School's new principal, Jennifer VanDeusen, welcomes teachers this week ahead of classes starting Wednesday.

View from the top:

Defining the goals, ideals and values of a school are just as important as having classrooms ready for learning, says Streamwood High School's new Principal Jennifer VanDeusen.

That's where the school's new motto -- "strive, honor, succeed." -- comes in.

"We wanted it to really reflect a growth mindset for a progressive student of today," said VanDeusen.

She said students really didn't connect with the school's previous ideals -- safety, hold yourself accountable and show respect.

"They wanted to showcase what being a Sabre means to them. We have some rebranding to do," she said.

VanDeusen decided to start this school year with a blank canvas, literally. Streamwood High's third floor has been repainted to provide a clean slate for students to display their artwork.

"Students get to have some input on the mark that they are leaving on the school," VanDeusen said. Over the summer, VanDeusen hired 21 new teachers and counselors and 11 administrators. Assistant principals have been getting teachers up to speed on different curricula, the administrative team has been on call 24/7 to handle any issues ahead of school opening, while support staff and deans have been handling building logistics, she said.

Since last week, teachers and administrators have been back in the building decorating classes, working on welcome signs for the front door, bulletin boards, and beautifying the employee lounge, which now has comfortable seating, a whiteboard and foosball and air hockey tables.

"We really wanted to have it be a place where our people could get together monthly and really see each other," VanDeusen said. "It could be a collaborative space for teachers."

On Wednesday, the school's roughly 1,995 students will be welcomed by the marching band and 230 staff members. Freshmen will get Sabre pride T-shirts as a treat.

"I really want students to be wowed on Day 1," VanDeusen said. "We're really going to focus on this idea of change and what it means to different people."

U-46 back-to-school prep by the numbers

- Facilities: 65 buildings, 57 schools and programs, four stadiums and five pools.
- Staff: 32 groundskeepers, 34 maintenance workers, 95 custodians and 152 outside cleaning contractors spent roughly 137,980 man-hours getting schools ready.
- Food for first day: 2,091 pounds of fresh apples; 1,168 pounds of burgers; 2,800 pounds of crinkle-cut fries; 12,000 slices of cheese pizza for elementary schools; 7,500 packs of Pop-Tarts for breakfast in classroom/carts; 600 pounds romaine lettuce; 600 pounds of fresh melon; 5,000 fresh bananas for secondary schools.
- Employees: a total of 2,596 teachers, including 227 new hires.
- Transportation: a fleet of 351 school buses currently serving 283 bus routes.
- Furniture: 1,577 pieces of new furniture, including bookcases, tackboards, desks, tables, chairs and file cabinets.
- Equipment: 5,863 new laptops, 500 new desktops and 11,750 new Chromebooks purchased.

Source: Elgin Area School District U-46

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U46 spends \$42M on improvements

Upgrades include library, athletic field, refinished floors and other work this summer

By: Rafael Guerrero

When District U46 students return to school Wednesday, they'll be greeted by more than \$42 million in cosmetic, athletic, mechanical and exterior improvements done over the summer break, officials said.

The U46 school board was given an overview of the work at its Monday meeting in addition to a briefing on the district's staffing, transportation and other things that are in place for when classes resume for the 2019-20 school year.

"People who stop you on the street in this role or any other role and say, 'Boy, it must be nice to have your summer off.' It's always a chuckle because we don't get our summers off," U46 CEO Tony Sanders said.

Chief Operations Officer Jeff King said the work done this summer is equivalent to the amount of construction undertaken in 2001, after voters approved a bond referendum. In this case, money came from multiple sources, including the district's education, maintenance and operations funds, King said.

The libraries at Bartlett, South Elgin, and Larkin high schools were upgraded at a cost of about \$2.2 million to make the space more flexible for students to work on group presentation or do independent study, officials said.

South Elgin High School's athletic complex has a new press box and stadium lighting — at a cost of about \$1.5 million — which will allow for night football games to be held for the first time in the school's history, officials said. At Larkin High School, \$730,000 is being spent to renovate the outdoor track.

Parking lot seal coating and paving was done at 24 schools throughout the district, officials said. Twelve schools had their indoor flooring tiles replace, three schools had their main gym floors sanded, painted and resealed and several others were scrubbed and recoated.

"Usually during most years, we do a lot of behind-the-scenes construction — boilers and roofs and stuff people don't really see," board member Donna Smith said. "But I think this year the people are going to walk into the schools and notice the floors we've done and the stadiums and libraries. It's a lot of things people will notice."

Other upgrades or repair work will be less visible but just as important, officials said. Centennial Elementary School in Bartlett has a new HVAC system, Elgin High School's electrical and water systems were replaced, Kenyon Woods Middle School has a new water chiller, Streamwood High School has new fire alarms, and multiple schools have upgraded automation systems.

The district needed to hire 279 teachers this summer and still had 49 vacancies as of Monday, said Ann Chan, assistant superintendent for human resources. All full-time

general education teaching positions at the elementary school level are filled, and they hope remains that all of the jobs will be filled for the new year, she said.

They're also still hiring for other non-teaching positions as well, including bus drivers, food services workers, paraeducators and others, Chan said. All job openings are listed on the U46 website, she said.

More than 280 school bus routes will be operated this year, King said. Drivers have picked their routes and were making practice runs. All 351 school buses were cleaned and received safety inspections this summer, he said.

Food services is expanding the breakfast program to 22 schools this school year, King said. The department is also beginning to harvest crops from a new vegetable garden planted outside its commissary, and they will be served at schools that have salad bars, he said.

Extra \$14M to keep U46 \$594M budget in black

By: Rafael Guerrero

School District U46 will receive \$14 million more in evidence-based schools funding from the state than had been projected, ensuring its proposed \$954 million budget is balanced, district officials said.

The U46 school board was briefed Monday on the new funding as part of its review of the tentative final budget for the 2019-20 school year.

The funding bump means the district's income from all sources will be about \$596 millions, not the \$581 million that had been projected when the spending plan was discussed in June. That ensures the \$594 million budget, expected to be approved next month, will have a \$2 million surplus, officials said.

The additional revenue could mean money will be available to fund special projects for some of the district's schools, officials said.

CEO Tony Sanders said projects could include additional professional development sessions, changes in school hours and increase learning time. Changes would have to be approved by the school board, fit the district's five-year vision and strategic plans, and comply with union contracts, he said.

"It's really giving license to sites to think differently, realizing that 42 elementary schools, eight middle school, five comprehensive high schools may not need the exact same things," Sander said.

Evidence-based funding — which includes general state aid for schools and money for special education and English language learners programs — is the result of the General Assembly's revamping of the school funding formula. The amount of money being allocated to the district increased from \$120 million in 2017 to \$197 million for this school year.

The additional money has allowed the district to hire middle school counselors, expand its Chromebooks computer program, upgrade technology for teachers, and increase the number of repairs or upgrades at schools this summer, Sanders said.

“All of this wouldn’t be possible without evidence-based funding,” he said.

The district will also receive more than \$27 million from the state in categorical payments for transportation, special education and English language learner programs. Federal funding stayed about the same as last year at nearly \$39 million, Dale Burnidge, U46 director of financial operations, said.

The final budget reviewed Monday included some increases from the preliminary budget unveiled earlier this summer, officials said. Salaries estimates increased by more than \$2 million, capital expenses went up by more than \$5 million, and expenses for supplies and materials increased by \$1.3 million, documents showed.

A public hearing on the final budget is scheduled for Sept. 9. Board members will vote on the spending plan at their Sept. 23 meeting, ahead of the Sept. 30 deadline for district to submit their documents to the Illinois State Board of Education.